

## **BELPER HISTORICAL SOCIETY - YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023**

### **REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES**

This is the ninth Annual Report of Belper Historical Society (BHS) as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) for the year 2022-23. Founded in 1957, the Society sought charity status as a CIO in 2014 with an aspiration to be better placed to make its resources available to more people by increasing its membership and raising income to fund its work and maintain its archive material in a central and accessible building.

#### **Structure, Governance and Management**

In accordance with the Constitution and Rules of the Society, the Committee consists of:

- (a) Not less than four and up to five trustees who are the Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer and one or two other members of the Society and
- (b) six to nine other members of the Society who are all elected by the membership annually at the Annual General Meeting.

Documents for the 2022 AGM (Annual Report, Financial Statement and Trustee Balance Sheet) were supplied to members by e-mail.

The committee members appointed were as follows:

Chair and Ex-Officio Trustee - Adrian Farmer

Secretary and Ex-Officio Trustee – Neil Hallsworth

Treasurer and Ex-Officio Trustee – Heather Eaton

Elected Trustees – Adrian Keetley (Vice-Chair), Mary Featherby

Other Committee Members duly elected – Mary McLean Farmer, Jane Whitaker (Programme Secretary), Ian Jackson, Andrea White.

Appointments of future committee members now follow a more informal process, less rigorous than that required for Trustee nomination.

Adrian Keetley continued in office as a Trustee with Belper North Mill Trust as the Society's representative until stepping down at the beginning of 2023. It was decided not to replace him at this time.

#### **Objectives and Activities**

The main aims of the Society continued to be:

- Cultivate an interest in the history of Belper and its neighbourhood.
- Maintain the BHS Collection (artefacts, paintings, documents, photographs, maps and Library books and paper archives).
- Encourage practical historical research into Belper's past.
- Providing lectures, publications, displays and exhibitions and making such resources available for study by the general public.

To support these aims, meetings are held monthly where talks or walks of local and historical interest are given by members and visiting speakers. The lecture programme continues to be the

main activity of the Society, sustained largely through an annual membership subscription to offset programme and room hire costs.

The main activities for the past year have been:

- Community events in April at Belper and Milford in July.
- Maintenance and expansion of the BHS website.
- Continue the rationalisation and review of storage of the archive collection.
- Greater access for members to the Society's library.

## **Achievements and Performance**

In April, the Society's first 'extra' event since the Covid lockdowns was held at No.28, working in collaboration with the No.28 community hall, the Belper Market Place Research Group, Our Belper Mills and local authors. A series of short talks were given by Adrian Farmer and Viv Scott during the day, supported by a series of stalls and a small display of artefacts relating to the Belper nailing industry. The final talk was a tribute to the late Mary Smedley, the Society's one-time Chair and Secretary, for which the venue was at full capacity. The Historical Society raised £98 on the book stall and £257 in donations at the event, which was free to enter, as part of the society's charitable work.

In July, with support from a small grant from Belper Town Council, the Society held a community history day for Milford, based in the village school. The school had approached the Historical Society about holding a heritage-focussed free event specifically for Milford. This offer by the school allowed the first public opportunity to see inside the county's oldest school building still used for teaching, and gave the society a chance to engage Milford people with their local history. Large-scale historic photographs were printed and mounted on boards to illustrate the village's development; a textile specialist led a Giant Knitting and Weaving workshop to help families understand how cotton from the mills was used to clothe the world; trail sheets were printed specifically designed to encourage visitors and local families to explore the village's heritage; a memory tree was created with cards for people to record their memories of Milford; and Belper North Mill Trust Education Volunteer Team provided learning activities for children. Other activities included heritage walks and talks, an advice stall on heritage matters and a tour of the school. The village's new interpretation panels and heritage trail were also unveiled as part of the day's activities, which attracted about 300 people.

## **Membership**

Membership since the enforced break in 2020/1 remains low in comparison with recent years.

The Society is in the process of moving its membership database from an Excel spreadsheet to a system known as membermojo. The existing spreadsheet has to be edited and updated manually, as do things such as mailing lists, attendance registers, Gift Aid declarations, etc. Membermojo offers a low cost and user-friendly alternative, and will help ensure that our membership database is always up-to-date and accurate.

## **Programme**

There has been a varied programme of talks and walks throughout 2023, and for the first time there has been something on offer every month. In January, Gary Spendlove spoke about the history of Brettles, and the development of Slenderella. February's speaker cancelled due to Covid, but last minute stand-ins Jane Whitaker spoke about the trespassers around Milford in the 1830s and Adrian Farmer showed some new photos of Belper recently rediscovered. The March speaker also

called off due to Covid, and local folk singer and storyteller Pete Castle entertained us and got members singing along. In April, Cliff Lea gave a talk on the development of the Silkolene company. As a change from our usual programme, we had a visit to the Unitarian Chapel in May where members told us about the history of the Unitarians and the architecture of the building, followed by a visit to the crypt. The first of our summer walks was led by Ian Jackson around the Belper waterways, where he gave us the benefit of his new research. The next two walks were affected by the poor summer weather and few members turned out in the rain. Adrian Farmer led a visit to the farmyard at Crossroads Farm, including a look indoors, and Robert Reid led a walk around the southern part of Duffield in August, looking particularly at the Georgian architecture. Volunteers from Duffield church provided tea and cake. The Autumn season began with a well researched talk by Barbara Bowman on the West Mill tower. October's talk was also extremely informative. Rosemary Annable unpicked the "mythology" surrounding Jedediah Strutt's early life. In November, BHS member Steve Hill is talking on the industries of the Ambergate area. Our December speaker will be Denise Grace, with a talk on recent investigations shedding light on the medieval Belper Manor House and Laund area of Belper.

Due to the poor sound quality in the hall, and background interference from other groups, we are moving to Room 107 for 2024, which also involves changing evening to the third Thursday of the month. The programme for 2024 will be available online very soon.

## **Archive**

Some members grouped together and moved the archive car load by car load in October last year. Since then, regular meetings have taken place to organise and make the most of the space available.

One unfortunate situation to arise was the arrival of material from Strutt's North Mill which had been on loan to the museum. This has taken up much needed space for documents which means that many of them are still located in other places.

Scanning and photographing documents and photographs has continued. Working on the scanning has enabled decisions to be made on what material should be offered to Derbyshire Record Office. At present this is in 26 archive boxes in their storeroom and awaiting cataloguing.

Additionally, Belper Town Council is in the early stages of looking to rejuvenate St John's Chapel, where it may be possible for the Society to provide items for public viewing.

## Documents

Within the collection are many items for which we will never be able to provide satisfactory storage condition. Progress has been made in taking documents to Derbyshire Record Office where they will be available to a wider audience.

## Artefacts

These are still in our storage room, with progress being made slowly. The Collection policy for the acquisition and retention of artifacts of local interest remains as follows: *'that the archive will contain photographs, artefacts and paper material which illustrate and testify to the people of Belper, their working lives and businesses and those who were influenced by Belper'*.

## Photographs

A large number of BHS images were sent to the Derbyshire Record office last year. This year, we borrowed them back and made digital copies, with supporting catalogue. A large number of other images have also been scanned by Neil Hallsworth and Mary McLean Farmer, increasing the digital archive and allowing more images to be passed to the Record office for appropriate archiving.

## **Library**

Throughout 2023 the library has been opened every two months. Several members have borrowed books on a variety of local history subjects. It's also provided an opportunity for networking and for answering local history queries. A basic version of the catalogue is now available online for members to search. There have been several donations of books from members that have been added to the shelves. Sale of excess stock has raised funds towards the upkeep of the library.

## **Books**

Small numbers of the Society's publications *Historic Belper and Milford in Colour* and *Belper in Wartime* have continued to sell, raising over £270 in the past year. There are less than 30 copies of the former left available for sale.

## **Website**

Committee member Mary McLean Farmer continues to expand and manage the <https://belperhistoricalsociety.co.uk/> website. There are regular uploads of wills and land tax records. The contact form has proven to be a popular way of allowing the general public to contact the society with queries. All questions aim to be answered within 48 hours. In tandem with the Facebook page, Historic Belper, the society has a good internet presence. Most popular pages are the Homepage, History of Belper Pubs and Photographs.

## **Audrey Barrass**

The Society heard with sadness of the death of the President of the Society, Audrey Barrass. For many years, Audrey was the society's secretary and first point of contact for the public – she worked tirelessly for the society and will be greatly missed.

## **Stepping down**

Some committee members are stepping down at this AGM – Adrian Keetley, who served as secretary for many years, Heather Eaton, treasurer since 2017 and Mary McLean-Farmer, society webmaster, are not standing for re-election. We thank them for their service to the Society.

I too will be stepping down as Chair, and from the committee.

## **Plans for Future Periods**

Plans and objectives for 2023-24 will include the following key areas:

- Website - further development
- Continue current mix of meetings and walks
- Continue rationalisation of artifacts
- Continue with transcription and scanning of documents and photos
- Increase membership

## **Adrian Farmer**

Chair,

On behalf of Belper Historical Society Committee (and with thanks to Jane Whitaker, Neil Hallsworth, Heather Eaton and Mary McLean Farmer for their contributions)

15.10.23

# Belper Historical Society

CIO Charity No: 1158020

**YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023**

## Statement of Financial Activities (Including Income and Expenditure Account) for the Year Ended 31 August 2023.

Income	2023	2022	Expenditure	2023	2022
Bank Interest	717.34	0533.01	Library room hire	0273.27	0078.40
Members subscriptions	795.00	0915.00	Speakers fees	0238.60	0080.00
Visitor Donations	407.70	0015.00	Meetings Room Hire	0302.40	0073.00
Sales, donated books	221.81	0016.50	Web domain	0000.00	0021.58
Raffle, items all donated	273.00	0027.00	Banking Fees	0079.84	0048.96
Sales of WW1 Book	50.00	0130.00	Zoom Fees	0000.00	0028.78
Sales of Belper & Milford	238.00	0303.00	Comp ext back-up x2	99.98	0000.00
Sales of Images	000.00	0075.00	Printing Book	0000.00	0000.00
Milford School Grant	600.00		Archive storage No 30	0346.66	2241.56
			Archive storage Rm 101	2288.15	0000.00
			Milford School Grant	600.00	0000.00
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>3302.85</b>	2014.51	<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>3601.70</b>	2572.28

**Current Excess of Expenditure over Income 298.85**

## BALANCE SHEET at 31 August 2023

### Current Assets

Cash in hand	0.00
At HSBC Current A/c	2,304.73
At Cambridge & Counties Bank	22,243.25
At Mansfield Building Society	<u>37,742.49</u>
	62,290.47

### Represented by

General Fund at 1 Sep 2022  
  
62,469.21

### Net Current Assets

Current Liabilities (Uncashed 31 2023)

Sec Exp	8.80
Milford Sch	19.00
BTC	108.20
K Kerry	50.00
Belper NMT	150.00
Strutt Rm Hire	<u>30.16</u>
	366.16

General Fund at 31 Aug 2023

62,290.47

### Tangible Assets

Belper in WW1 book	
(Stock at Cost 350x3.86)	1351.00
Belper & Milford	
(Stock at Cost 56x3.77)	<u>211.12</u>
	1562.12

Net Assets 63,486.43

### Represented by

Unrestricted General Fund **62,290.47**

124 Lloyds Banking Group Shares at 31 Aug 2023 £42.35